

*Notice of a Black-headed Gull found recently in Devonshire.*

By F. W. L. Ross, Esq.

Among the many objects of natural history which have been discovered during the past months may be noticed the following remarkable bird.

This bird, to which may be applied the term of the giant of the Black-headed Gulls, was shot by a boatman, Mr. William Pine, while employed by W. Taylor, Esq., Bridgewater, who was engaged in fishing for Bass in the river off Exmouth, about the end of May or the beginning of June last; it was in company with a flock of ordinary Gulls. Its remarkable size and appearance attracted the attention of the boatman, who, having his gun with him, singled it out, and fortunately obtained the bird, which has since been kindly presented by the above-mentioned gentleman to the writer.

The usual locality of this bird is the shores of the Caspian Sea, but it is also recorded as having been found on the shores of the Red Sea, the Ganges, and the Ionian Islands, as well as accidentally on the margins of the Danube, in Hungary. One is led to suppose that it is by no means a common bird, as examples are rarely seen in collections. It is the

*Larus ichthyaëtus*, *Pall. Itin.* ii., *Apend.* n. 27; *Id. Zoogr.* ii. p. 322, t. 77; *Rüpp. Atlas*, t. 17.

Great Gull, *Lath. Gen. Syn.* iii. pt. ii. p. 370.

*Ichthyaëtus Pallasi*, *Kaup.*

*Xema ichthyaëtus*, *G. R. Gr. List of Gall. &c. B. M.* p. 171.

Head entirely, and part of neck, pure black; the rest of neck, beneath the body, upper tail-coverts, tail, ends of scapulars and secondaries pure white; the rest of upper surface of a pale plumbeous grey; quills pure white, with the ends black and the tips white, which latter colour is more prominent on the first quill, while the second has the black also divided irregularly with white near the end; a small white mark above and beneath the eyes.

Bill at its base livid yellow, with a crimson ring-like spot near the tip, which is fuscous yellow; and the feet fuscous red. When first obtained, the circles round the eyes were red.

Length 25 inches; wings 18 inches 6 lines; tarsi 3 inches; bare part of thigh 1 inch 9 lines; bill from gape  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches, from forehead 2 inches 6 lines.

Pallas informs us that this bird when flying emits a hoarse, raven-like cry of kóu, kóu. He further says that it lays its eggs on the bare sand, without the least preparation of a nest: they are in shape an oblong oval, marked with frequent brown spots, with some paler ones intermixed. It is known on the borders of the Caspian Sea by the name of 'Rybak,' or 'Gluchar,' and by the Tartars as 'Charabalta.'

Topsham, Nov. 24, 1859.